

What is claimed is:

1. A spark plug comprising:
  - a metal shell;
  - 5 a center electrode retained within said metal shell to be insulated from said metal shell, said center electrode having a given length and a tip projecting from said metal shell; and
  - a ground electrode including a noble metal-made tip and a body, the body being joined to said metal shell outside said center
  - 10 electrode in a lateral direction of the spark plug, the noble metal-made tip being connected to the body through a fused portion formed by materials of the body and the noble metal-made tip melted together and extending toward said center electrode to define a spark gap between the noble metal-made tip and said center
  - 15 electrode,
  - wherein if a portion of the noble metal-made tip of said ground electrode closest to the tip of said center electrode is defined as a ground electrode tip, and a portion of the fused portion closest to the tip of said center electrode is defined as a fused portion tip,
  - 20 said ground electrode tip and said fused portion tip are located within a range defined by a first line extending from the tip of said center electrode in a lateral direction of said center electrode and a second line extending from a portion of said center electrode closest to said ground electrode in a longitudinal direction parallel to a
  - 25 longitudinal center line of said center electrode so that said ground electrode tip and said fused portion tip do not overlap with the tip of

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said center electrode both in the lateral direction and in the longitudinal direction of said center electrode.

2. A spark plug as set forth in claim 1, wherein a minimum  
5 distance between the fused portion tip and the tip of said center electrode is greater than the spark gap by 0.2mm or more.
3. A spark plug as set forth in claim 1, wherein the noble  
metal-made tip of said ground electrode is made of a cylindrical  
10 member which has a diameter of 0.4mm to 0.8mm.
4. A spark plug as set forth in claim 1, wherein said noble  
metal-made tip of said ground electrode has a length projecting the  
fused portion, the length being between 0.3mm and 1.0mm.
- 15 5. A spark plug as set forth in claim 1, wherein the body of said  
ground electrode has a first portion and a second portion, the first  
portion being joined to same metal shell, the second portion  
extending from the first portion toward the longitudinal center line of  
20 said center electrode, a longitudinal center line of the second portion  
extending parallel to a longitudinal center line of the noble  
metal-made tip of said ground electrode.
6. A spark plug as set forth in claim 1, wherein the noble  
25 metal-made tip of said ground electrode is made of one of an Ir alloy  
and a Pt alloy.